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STATEMENT

BY

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OF FRETILIN

BEFORE

THE SPECIAL COMMITTE ON DECOLONIZATION

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates:

I have been entrusted by the Revolutionary Council of National Resistance (RCNR), the highest political-military body which represents the entire people of East Timor, to report to you, Mr. Chairman, developments in East Timor since the last session of the Committee.

The military situation

Indonesian military forces continue to occupy East Timor in violation of the rights of the people of the territory to self-determination and independence. At least 20,000 Indonesian troops, supported by tanks, helicopters, jet fighters, are engaged in unrelenting military offensives against the resistance fighters. There are Indonesian military units, ranging in strength of 2,000 down to 100 men, stationed in the capital, Dili, in all 13 districts and in the smallest towns.

The international Baukau airport, built by the Portuguese in the late sixties, capable of receiving almost any aircarft, has been closed to international trafic since 1975; instead, it has become a major military air base. No foreign visitors who occasionally visited the territory in specially arranged tours of one to three days have ever been allowed to approach the airport.

In the last 12 months, the Indonesian military command has

launched a series of special operations, involving 1,000 helicopter-borne elite troops with the single mission of capturing the resistance leader, Jose Xanana Gusmao. All these attempts have failed.

The Resistance

The resistance has grown in size, strength, organizational capabilities, political unity. The mere fact that 13 years of a massive and brutal occupation has not succeeded in crushing the resistance is a demonstration of the solid political unity among the East Timorese. It cannot be said that the resistance against Indonesian occupation is based on ideological motivation alone or on one particular East Timorese political group.

We recall last year's session when four leaders of the Timorese Democratic Union (U.D.T.) addressed this Committee. The speaker was Mr. Joao Carrascalao, head of the International Relations Commission of that indigenous Timorese movement. Mr. Carrascalao had visited East Timor in 1985 and again in 1986 as guest of the Indonesian government in an effort to win him over. As he testified last year before this Committee, the U.D.T. leaders and followers have never accepted integration with Indonesia.

We recall also how the Indonesian side has claimed over the years that the U.D.T. was the largest political party in East Timor. If the Indonesian officials maintain this assertion, than

we can all agree that both U.D.T. and FRETILIN represent the overwhelming majority of the people of the territory.

Mr. Inacio de Moura, a Portuguese journalist and poet who lived in East Timor for almost 20 years untill his escape from the territory early this year,has testified that the Indonesian army has suffered 20,000 dead since the invasion; there are at least 1,500 resistance fighters active in the country; the overwhelming majority of the people oppose Indonesian presence. It should be noted that Mr. Moura was an aide to puppet governor Mario Carrascalao and was the guide/interpreter of foreign journalists and diplomats who visited the territopry over the years.

In retaliation against the resistance, the army of occupation has resorted to brutal military operations that remind us of the TV scenes of South African police action against unarmed civilians in the black townships. However, the Indonesian army (the army of a Third World country, member of this committee and an aspirant to the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement) has done worse, razing entire villages, massacring women and children.

Indonesian colonization

East Timor's indigenous population was between 670,000 and 700,000 in 1975. The overwhelming majority of the population lived in the countryside, spread out in small villages. Dili, the

capital, had a population of no more than 30,000 and that included Europeans and ethnic Chinese merchants. East Timor has become today a land of displaced people, a huge concentration camp. Tens of thousands of East Timorese were forced out of their ancestral lands where they had lived for centuries and herded into so-called "resettlement camps". The population of Dili swelled to 100,000. However, we must note with alarm that no less than 50% of this are Indonesians.

Indonesians are to be found today in every town in East Timor; they are to be found occupying most of the jobs in the civil sector. While a few years ago there was some pretence of having East Timorese in certain key posts, today most have been push aside to give way to the military.

The school system, particularly at the secondary, tertiary and university level, discriminates against the indigenous people. There have been cases of protest and riot against such discrimination. And as the East Timorese youth become more restless and resentful against the widespread discrimination, the repressive power of the state is turned against them. East Timorese students, both in East Timor and elsewhere in Indonesia, have suffered harassment, imprisonment, and assassination.

In a nutshell, Mr. Chairman, it all amount to colonization in its worst forms.

Propaganda and reality

We are certain, Mr. Chairman, that in the course of this session, we shall hear the Indonesian representative refuting the charges made by petitioners from all four corners of the globe. We shall hear also the monotonous repetition of state propaganda about the wonders the Indonesian army of occupation have brought to the East Timorese. However, the reality is simply different.

The reality is, Mr. Chairman, the East Timorese cannot travell freely in their own country; they are required to have a "travel permit", nothing less than the hated South African pass for the blacks; East Timorese cannot leave the country except for a few exceptions; likewise, East Timorese residing abroad cannot visit their home of birth except for a few individual cases that serve Indonesia propaganda purposes; thousands of families have been separated for over 10 years; all mail is subjected to censorship; East Timorese cannot make a call to their relatives and friends in Australia and vice versa.

It should be recalled here, Mr. Chairman, that over the years, we hear Indonesian official spokesmen announce that by the end of the year, East Timor will be open for tourism; a few years ago we even heard that an international telephone service had been inaugurated. These are lies. East Timor remains/a closed

territory since 1975, the year the Portuguese left and Indonesia invaded; there was a telephone networtk linking every district and the country with the rest of the world; one could phone Lisbon, London, New York. Journalists could send their stories by telex. Today, East Timor is completely cut off from the outside world.

Is there anything Indonesia needs to hide? Why is Indonesia so afraid of the truth? Indonesia is afraid of the truth because it is starkly different from its official propaganda.

While in the past there was a symbolic ICRC presence in the territory, today there is none; only occasionally a ICRC nurse visits the territory. These occasional visits do not serve any useful purpose. ICRC is not fulfilling its mandate which, inter alia, calls for prison visitation, tracing missing persons, protection of civilians in areas of conflict. Hundreds of prisoners in remote military camps have had no protection whatsoever; they are not even recognized as political prisoners or POW.

Indonesian judicial process is a farce; prisoners have no due legal aid; the legal system is corrupt and entirely dominated by the military.

Is a solution possible?

It is almost 13 years since Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor. The fact that this Committee is still discussing the issue today is a tribute to the heroic resistance of the East

Timorese people; we have no illusions that had armed resistance ceased the world would have accepted Indonesian policies of "fait accompli"; it is also a tribute to the ever growing number of individuals and organizations all over the world who have had the courage and moral integrity to speak out for the people of East Timor; it is a tribute to Member States that have not allowed selfish short-term interests to prevail over the sacred principles embodied in the Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

In the last 12 months, we have been encouraged by statements of suppport from members of the U.S. Congress, European Parliament, the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference, and from other Churches in Europe, Asia and the South Pacific region. We are heartened by the continuing concern as expressed publicly by His Holliness Pope John Paul II.

We have noted the unequivocal position taken by the Portuguese President, Dr. Mario Soares, Prime Minister, Prof. Cavaco Silva, and the Parliament, in reaffirming Portuguese commitment to the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. We have been encouraged by the stand taken by the EEC in its Ministerial meeting in Dusseldorf in April this year.

It is ironic, Mr. Chairman, that while the legal Administering power of the territory has clearly shown its desire to comply with its obligations to the UN by granting independence to East Timor, a member of this very Committee is behaving as a

stone age conqueror.

It is certainly an embarassment to this Committee to have one of its members acting in a far worse fashion than the former European colonial powers. It is about time, we believe, that the government of Indonesia reviews its stand. We only need to hear from the Indonesian side that it wishes to sit down with the representatives of the East Timorese people to find ways to end a conflict that has already cost 200,000 East Timorese lives, 20,000 Indonesians, and tarnished Indonesia's image in the world.

On our part, we wish to reiterate the following points:

1. We are prepared to begin talks with the Indonesian side without pre-conditions;

2. We understand Indonesia's security concerns and to this end we are prepared to discuss ways and means to allay such fears;

3. An independent East Timor - if that is the wish of the people of the territory - would work towards regional cooperation and integration; to this end, an independent East Timor would apply for membership in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Pacific Forum;

4. FRETILIN and U.D.T. believe that a multi-party system with constitutional guarantees on individual rights, freedom of Press, religion, speech and private property, would be the best guarantee that all East Timorese will enjoy equal rights and

protection;

5. Finally, a referendum or general elections on the basis of one man, one vote, in accordance with Res. 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV), should be held under U.N. supervision, unless an alternative formula is found among the parties concerned in the process of the dialogue referred to in point 1.

We are encouraged by the new political climate that seems to prevail now around the world. An early solution to regional conflicts is in sight as the different actors in the world stage are making serious efforts to bring about an end to these conflicts.

We should hope that the Indonesian side will seize the momentum to rethink its stand and accept the olive branch we are extending. However, while we are prepared to bend backwards to facilitate an early solution to the conflict in East Timor, we shall perservere in our struggle at all costs if the other side maintains its position of arrogant defiance of the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.